

August 1959

Volume 38

Number 447

LABOUR ORGANISER



CONTENTS



A Time of Opportunity

Keep Talking, Keep Selling

Don't Wait for the Signal

120 Meetings in a Week

Check These Changes Now

PRICE FIVEPENCE

Situations Vacant

SOUTH EAST DERBYSHIRE C.L.P. invites applications for the post of full-time Secretary/Agent. The appointment will be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from **Mr. J. Cattermole (Regional Organiser), 110 Mansfield Road, Nottingham**, to whom they should be returned not later than 24th August, 1959.

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AUGUST 1959

PRICE FIVEPENCE

A Time of Opportunity

THE events of the past few weeks can have done little to encourage the Tories as they turn to face the coming test of a General Election.

The sorry record of some leading Tory ministers needs no retelling here.

What we should remember, however, is that whatever back-bench Tory P.s., candidates and workers may think about their leaders' record, they will not allow their doubts and reservations to weaken their efforts to secure the return of another Tory Government.

All through the next month or so, while Parliament is not meeting, they will be at work in the constituencies, knocking out every Tory supporter.

The weeks ahead may well be decisive in influencing the election result, and Constituency Labour Parties should regard this period, not as a kind of lull before the electoral battle, but as a time of opportunity for making certain a Labour victory.

Two articles which we publish this month help to illuminate the point. Mr. Ian Mikardo reminds us that, "elections are won and lost not by attracting voters but by what might be called floating abstainers." And he describes how all activities should be viewed in the light of this fact.

On another page, Miss Barker recalls

how the tremendous increase in Labour representation after the 1923 election followed intensive work in the constituencies on a scale unknown before.

There can be no doubt then that, though a great deal has been done to strengthen our organisation, we cannot be satisfied until the Four Point Programme of Action has been completed.

This is the minimum task for each constituency:

1. Reach the required target of 'Promises'.
2. Systematically trace all 'Removals'.
3. Register at least 500 Labour supporters for 'Postals'.
4. Sell copies of *The Future Labour Offers You* to 'Promises' and 'Doubtfuls'.

Some constituencies have made great efforts, and we have news of marginal seats which have been helped by volunteers coming from neighbouring areas to canvass during the light evenings.

The reports of these canvassers show that even in districts which are supposedly Tory there are a considerable number of Labour sympathisers who are really only waiting to be contacted. Sustained effort can turn these electors into voters, and a Tory marginal into a sound Labour seat.

Now is the time to go in and win!

Yes, but I need a rest!

PERSONAL VIEW FROM RON STEVENS
RICHMOND & BARNES CLP SECRETARY

HOW I wish the Labour Party would show a little realism in planning its various organisational campaigns. The July issue of the *Labour Organiser*, in its main article, contains the statement that not many ordinary people have more than a fortnight's holiday and reading this in its context the clear implication is that we ought to be 'on the job' all the rest of the time.

It is time the backroom boys realised that, with the exception of those parties with full-time agents, we are all volunteers and that the work which we gladly do for the Party has to be done in addition to our normal breadwinning activities.

In my spare time this year, I have already (a) played a large part in my party's 'Into-Action' campaign, (b) acted as agent to twelve candidates in two boroughs in the municipal elections, and (c) attended various conferences and meetings at the behest of the Labour Party. All this is in addition to my normal work as party secretary. Other officers of the party have been similarly placed.

All this is leading up to my main point, which is that Party workers now need a little rest if they are to put their maximum effort into the General Election

when it comes. In this party we have for many years regarded August as a time of minimum activity when, although we may not be actually 'on holiday' for the whole month, we are at least relaxing and spending our evenings and weekends with our families for a change.

It seems from the article in the *Labour Organiser* and from the literature we have had from our Regional Organisation that the official intention is that we should forgo our rest this year. While I fully realise the necessity of making the maximum effort at the General Election may I respectfully suggest that this is not the way to go about it.

Speaking for myself, I feel thoroughly tired out, and I need a rest if I am to make anything more than a half-hearted effort when the battle breaks. I appreciate that not all members will have been working so hard as the active officers but nevertheless they have been exhorted to do so many things in the last few months that they too deserve a rest.

I am sure that this latest brainchild of a campaign in August is very ill-advised and, to use your own phrase, we would be much better to go into a coma for a short while and to emerge, refreshed and reinvigorated, ready for the battle in the autumn.

You can rest after victory

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

NOBODY appreciates the self-sacrifice of our voluntary workers, and especially Party secretaries, more than we do. Voluntary workers do their Party work in what should be their leisure time. Those of us who work full-time for the Party have the advantage of doing the job we enjoy doing and getting paid for it.

That is why we give much more to our work than we might be inclined to do if employed in another occupation. Also, we are conscious that anything we try to do would count for little if it were not for the co-operation of the voluntary workers in the Party.

Nevertheless, we make no apology for

the appeal made in last month's leading article to these workers to make a special effort during what has come to be regarded as the political close season.

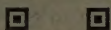
The result of the next General Election hangs on what happens in the marginal constituencies, and there is not a single party in any marginal constituency that can claim that everything that can be done to win the seat next October already has been done.

If we do not win the General Election much of the effort put in during the past four years will have been wasted, and is reasonable to make an extra effort now so that we may enjoy some respite in the first years of a Labour Government.

QUAIR'S PAGE

URING the Spring *The Times*, perhaps on the chance of a May General Election, devoted much space to 'political youth', with a lot of concentration on more-or-less-Labour youth; to two long articles by 'Our Special Respondent', and several columns of letters.

This page touched upon the matter a couple of months ago and, having asked to obtain the Editor's *imprimatur*, apologises to nobody for returning to it. The striking aspect of 'Our Special Respondent's' productions was his apparent unconsciousness that any political life existed outside the Universities. Perhaps Top People and their scribes were in narrow circles. It followed naturally that the succession of very long letters came from present or ex-undergraduates.



WE felt it proper in June to direct your attention to the mental anguish of a former chairman of Oxford University Labour Club, a Mr. Dennis Potter, who couldn't see any good in the Labour Party. Our gentle remonstrances with this young man may not have reached him, but probably he read (and let us hope, inwardly digested) a sterner comment from his successor, the present chairman, Mr. Robert Rowland.

He charges the Potter types with attempting to create a critical élite regarding itself as something very special and very different, within the Labour Party. Ha, that isn't confined to the Universities; we've got 'em in our Party, and perhaps you may have in your Party. And, let us be fair, they are not juveniles.

He notes that for this élite to take any part in the run of Party work, such as canvassing at the local elections, or canvassing would be regarded as hopelessly demeaning. He invites the Potters to remain an old age pensioner or an unemployed family and learn something of the life of the people.

Mr. S. L. Hugh-Jones, of N.A.L.S.O., agrees, and is responsible for a remarkable declaration. Perpend. "One

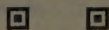
Perpend,* ye Top People

reason why the recent activities of young socialists have been outside the party is simply that there exists no party organisation which could include them."

Yet he must have some glimmering, for later on he says, "A leading member of the party once said to me, 'Frankly, the average agent finds the Youth Section a bit of a nuisance.'"

We happen to know several hard-working agents and secretaries. Presumably they are not average, for all of them have devoted a lot of time and effort to setting up Youth Sections, and some of them have succeeded. Others, alas, have found no human material out of which to make anything. *Ex nihil, nihil fit.*

The Labour Party, and especially those of us who most strongly feel the necessity for the constant injection of generous young blood into its veins, must keep things in proportion. Much as we welcome recruits from the Universities, we don't depend on the Universities. For every undergraduate in the country there are hundreds of youths and maidens who are working in factories, on the railways, in coal mines, in carpenters' shops and builders' yards, and on the land.



LABOUR Members of Parliament have come from all these sources and won an abiding place in political history. Many of them would not be classified as scholars, but they had learnt much that cannot be taught in schools. Some of us indeed, feel that the present Parliamentary Party would be none the worse if it comprised rather less of the University, business and professional elements, and more who have lived in the hurly-burly of industrial life.

As for the young 'uns, whether students or shop workers, we shall do well to regard their scufflings with tolerance. A candidate wrote me only yesterday saying, "Only a few years ago I was saying the same things."

* *Perpend my words, O Signieur Dew, and mark.*
—SHAKESPEARE.

The big battle in South Leith

by HARRY HAWTHORNE

DURING the past two years I have been responsible for the municipal election campaign in the South ward of the marginal Leith constituency. For a number of years, there had been an anti-Labour majority of around one thousand, on a poll of 36 to 38 per cent of an electorate of fourteen to sixteen thousand.

In 1957 some steps were taken to improve the ward organisation, in an endeavour to reach a marginal status. A fairly wide canvass took place, and the Labour candidate did a good deal of doorstep work.

Two tasks were undertaken. First, an attempt to increase the Labour vote over that of the previous year, and second, to reduce the opposition vote. Both of these aims were achieved. The Labour vote rose by 125 and the opposition vote fell by 452. The anti-Labour majority was 422, and the percentage poll 37.3 per cent.

After this South Leith was generally regarded as marginal. The same candidate was adopted for the 1958 contest. Doorstep work was concentrated on potential Labour supporters. Steps were taken again to reduce the opposition vote. Polling day organisation of a limited type was operated in the largest polling district. On a poll of 38.4 per cent, the Labour vote increased by a further 320, and the opposition vote fell by 288, which resulted in a Labour victory

with a majority of 186. *We had now created a key marginal!*

The retiring anti-Labour councillor in 1959 had served 20 years on the council and he was usually returned with a majority of around one thousand. It was appreciated that a concentrated effort would be needed to achieve a Labour success. A strong and hard-working Labour candidate was selected who consolidated the activity of the previous canvasses.

Polling day organisation on a full scale was carried out in three of the four polling districts. There was a good number of enthusiastic helpers. On a 45.1 per cent poll, the Labour vote further increased by 304, to reach the total of 3,139, but the anti-Labour vote was 3,252, so victory was denied us by a majority of 113.

By creating a key marginal we have given birth to difficult problems. Solid blocks of supporters of each candidate can be relied upon to go to the poll. But what about the 'fringe' supporters, the two or three hundred Labour promises who, if they voted, could determine the issue in our favour? What steps can be taken to persuade these electors to cast their votes? We have tried many things but perhaps some of your readers with experience in marginal areas can offer ideas that can be used to stimulate these fringe supporters.

CALLING RPA 89-90 . . .

AN enterprising taxi firm have suggested that "now the limitation on cars at Parliamentary elections has been removed", agents might like to hire the company's vehicles for use on polling day. They go on to state that their cars are equipped with inter-com. radio.

Unfortunately, this is a case of firms rushing in where agents fear to tread—for if the suggestion was followed out, there would be some prosecutions and void seats after the election!

Every agent must be aware that the repeal of Section 88 of the R.P.A. 1949 only removes the limitation on the number of cars which may be used to carry electors to the poll.

Sections 89 and 90, which prohibit the

use of hackney carriages and other vehicles available for hire, are still in force.

It may be that some people are not too clear on this, so agents will be well advised to take special steps to make the position known to all supporters.

The use of one or two radio cars might be useful for the candidate and agent in widespread constituencies, but presumably the closed circuit transmitter would be operated from the firm's premises. Messages would be heard by all the other drivers still on normal hire work and this might present difficulties. If the technical problems could be overcome, might be worth looking at!

KEEP TALKING, KEEP SELLING

DECIDED to have a night out with FLOY and it turned out to be more interesting and successful than I had expected.

I chose a suburban area in which to try my trade and after visiting 47 houses I found that in the course of 10 hours I had sold 18 copies of the new pamphlet.

At the first five houses I received a blank and disdainful refusals. First from a man. Then successively from two women. Then again from a man and a woman. They were all Tories whom Labour Party literature however attractive and 'glossy' was anathema.

This was enough to start putting one down the job, but fortunately I had prepared my mind for this kind of attitude and I was not dissuaded.

THEY WERE AGHAST

At the next house a very pleasant man bought a copy. So did the next door again, but only after I had persuaded her that we should all be broadminded enough to read one another's literature.

On I went from door to door, and long before I had reached the last one became absolutely convinced that the surest way of finding out who is against us is to display our precious pamphlet when canvassing!

Some Tories and Liberals stood back almost aghast when they saw that I was trying to purvey. Their vigilance was deep rooted and they were going to have no truck with me. But what varied types I met! In some cases they were willing to accept the pamphlet if I would give it them. They always refused to buy Party literature, *on principle*. But I really wondered how many refusals they had previously made on that moral basis!

I could not condescend to do business of this unprofitable character so I said 'good evening' and went on my way.

W. T. YOUNG sets out to find the best ploy with FLOY

After being turned away by a really scowling huzzy, I came upon a man and wife who occupied quite a bit of my time. They were Liberals and therefore they wouldn't buy. I offered to make a bargain: I would buy one of their pamphlets if they would buy one of mine. But they had none to sell. However, they seemed favourably impressed with my attitude and were willing to talk a little longer.

I found he was a printer and of course on strike, or locked out. Instead of being against his employer for this calamity the wife was against the trade union leaders. 'Too big for their shoes,' she said. 'Ought to meet the employers and settle the thing,' she continued.

I did my best and in the end the man really did feel that justice was on the men's side. So I sold another pamphlet and again trod my way.

I then called on several Labour supporters who were pleased to see me and who were glad to buy the pamphlet.

SIX IN HAND

Gradually my score was mounting. I carried six at a time and had gone back to my car to replenish my stock, for it is a mistake to stand at the door with only one copy on view. At least it does not make for easiness of approach, as far as I am concerned. On the other hand it's useful to intimate that the few you have left are the remainder of quite a good sale down the road!

Well, I'm back on the doorstep again and this time I am met by someone who persuades me to come right inside. He's Labour, but he's had enough of nationalisation although he

agrees with nationalisation of the mines. He took a pamphlet and admired the quality of it.

Meanwhile I said a few encouraging words. Why was he against nationalisation in general, but in favour of it for the mines? Well, the only reason I could find for this was that his wife was a native of Durham. That was a useful tip to me, so I sold another pamphlet and pursued the even tenor of my ways.

Subsequently, I had managed to call to the door a giant of a man who declared that he had "no faith in none of them". "They are all out for themselves," he said, but rather less politely.

Anyway, we argued and as often as I popped the question just as often did he refuse. We had more argument during which we talked about the mass poverty of long ago and agreed that it was a good thing that that scourge seemed to be gone for good.

I partly succeeded in persuading him that the Labour Government had something to do with getting rid of it. Then he told me that his wife knew all about it. She came from Wales. I said the people in South Wales had more political gumption than most others. This seemed to please him a bit, and finally I found myself with yet another customer.

By this time I was getting near the end of my business. Then who should I meet but another printer and his wife. They were all right, but she wondered how they were going to manage on strike pay of £5 a week.

I said I couldn't answer that, but that I had been involved in a strike which lasted for six months in which the strike pay was never higher than 7s. 6d. a week and was reduced to 5s., then 3s., then 2s. 6d., and then nothing at all.

I asked her how she thought my wife and I managed on that. She couldn't answer my question either. They agreed times had changed. I praised the Labour Party for this and sold another of my booklets.

A few more calls, some of which were successful, and I had done for the night.

I had made 47 calls and sold 18 pamphlets and went home feeling satisfied that the 'glossy' product is really a good seller, and that we ought easily to sell 4,000 copies in the constituency in which I had been vendor for the night.

THE STRANGE

'THEY'M bright 'uns in Birds Row ay they?' That was the old boy greeting to me near his polling station in the urban district elections. I was about to agree with him when I realised he was referring to the polling station staff—and not the residents!

'They got the "voting papers" a mixed up,' he continued, 'put that "so-and-so" Tory's name between Sam Baker and Joe Soap.' The penny dropped!

We had taken the usual precaution to remind electors of the Labour candidates' names — on the election address, poll cards, window slips and posters, but at the count it was apparent that many electors had voted for the first or last three names on the ballot paper.

In one ward a well-known Labour candidate was second on the list, and here there were a number of votes for the second, third and fourth candidates. The fourth candidate was a 'unknown' Tory, but he polled more votes than either of the two retiring Tory councillors—who were more peeved at that than at losing the seats!

Confused voter

There is no doubt that in many areas electors do get confused with ballot papers which present them with 'a easy six' or an even longer list to choose from.

It's this sort of thing which prompts the occasional resolution asking for legislation to permit the political affiliation of candidates to be shown on the ballot paper.

A somewhat related problem arises when casual vacancies are filled at the annual election, and voters used to voting for one candidate only, suddenly find they have two votes—least, some of them do!

This happened in two wards in our urban district this year, where the local party secretary took advantage

ASE OF THE UNKNOWN TORY

the facilities at the count to analyse voting figures.

There were two Labour candidates and one Conservative in each ward. In ward 'A' the Labour candidates' names appeared first and second on the ballot paper. 1,077 electors voted, and of these 493 used only one vote.

Of these were for the Conservative candidate—one can appreciate the value of this; but one Labour candidate had 157 'plumpers' and the other 110.

Top of the Poll

The secretary (who was top of the poll) is convinced that this single result by 267 Labour voters was only due to a partial failure to cover poll-cards which had been predicted. He modestly concludes that the extra votes were due solely to the name appearing first on the ballot paper!

The interesting thing is that only 19 of the electors who used their two votes gave one to the Conservative and the other to one of the Labour candidates. So there was little confusion over the political affiliations of the candidates here—only a failure by many electors to appreciate the fact that they had two votes.

In ward 'B', the Conservative candidate's name was 'sandwiched' between the names of the two Labour candidates—by a remarkable coincidence the total number of electors who voted the same as in ward 'A'—1,077. Of these, 382 electors used only one vote, of these, 216 were for the Conservative candidate while 166 single votes were given to one or other of the Labour candidates.

The reduction in the number of votes for Labour's candidates in ward 'B' may have been effected by the distribution of the poll-cards. Electors voted for the Conservative or one or other of the Labour candidates. In this instance, the candi-

date named last on the ballot paper polled the highest number of votes.

After making allowances for those electors who deliberately voted for individuals rather than for party candidates, it does seem that, at least in this urban district, the electors were not unduly confused by the 'order of appearance' on the ballot paper. Incidentally there was only one spoilt paper in each count.

Margin of error

Some of the smaller boroughs and urban districts are not divided into wards—and here there may be a very much larger number of candidates. (I've seen 22 names on a ballot paper—and I'm not claiming that as a record.) In these instances the margin of error must be very great—even when lists of party candidates have been provided.

The counting of the votes can become confusing, and it is not often possible to get a detailed analysis such as we have been examining here. If any reader has been able to do this at such an election, we would be interested to study it.

G. H. WILLIAMS

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Don't wait for the Signal

POLITICAL campaigning is of two quite different kinds, which are separated by time. The first of these is the campaigning which is carried out between elections, and the second is the election campaign itself.

It follows that at a certain point in time we have to switch from number one to number two.

The timing of that switch from one type of campaigning to the other must be chosen carefully. The right moment for the change is not necessarily the date when the Prime Minister chooses to announce the dissolution of Parliament.

The most notable difference between these two types of campaigning is that when we switch over to the election campaign the tempo of our work becomes faster and the urgency greater. But this is not the main difference between the two types. The really fundamental difference is that the *objective* of the election campaign is quite different from the objective which we seek in campaigning between elections.

In our work between elections, we might say that the objective which we are seeking is to make friends and influence people. During this period

the work in the constituencies is allied to the work of the Party nationally and to the work of the Parliamentary Party in expounding our policies, in getting support for them from more and more people, and in attacking the Tories.

This constitutes the slow process of *conversion* of new electors, and of a very small proportion of existing electors, that goes on, backwards and forwards, over the years.

It is work which naturally spills over into some organisational activity (for example, recruiting new members, and persuading some inactive members to become active), but primarily the objective is widespread, unselective evangelism rather than concentrated selective organisation, which is the objective of the election campaign.

In order fully to understand this difference we must ask ourselves the question, particularly in relation to marginal constituencies: What wins an election?

The answer is that elections are won and lost not by floating voters but by what might be called floating abstainers.

The overwhelming majority of the electorate vote the same way, when they vote at all, all their lives; and the overwhelming majority of the remainder switch their votes only once, or at most twice, in their lifetime.

Moreover, the decision to switch is much more likely to be made in the years between elections than in the short period of the election campaign.

Thus, at the moment when we begin the election campaign, the number of floating voters available for conversion is very small indeed, and certainly not enough to justify an immense effort at conversion.

The fact is that the Party which wins the election (and I repeat I am writing of marginal constituencies) is the Party which best succeeds in getting to the poll the highest possible proportion of those people who, if they vote at all, will vote for that Party.

We win when we so enthuse our rural supporters that a higher proportion goes to the poll, and a lower proportion abstains, than is the case with the Tories. And *vice versa*. We lost seats in 1955 not because large numbers of people who voted Labour in 1951 voted Tory in 1955, but because more than a million people who voted Labour in 1951 did not vote at all in 1955.

Similarly, an examination of recent Parliamentary by-election results, and Municipal election results, indicates the present partial recovery of the Tories from their low point after Suez, resulted from the return to the polling booth of a proportion of those Tory supporters who abstained during the period when they were most disappointed in their Government.

This analysis of the extent to which elections are won, not by conversion of voters by enthusing one's own supporters, but, of course, some important policy implications. But I am not discussing the implications in this article, in which I will confine myself to discussing the *organisational* implications of this analysis.

The argument that, in marginal constituencies, the primary objective of the election campaign is *not* to convert electors based on the very definition of the 'marginal constituency'.

Leaving aside the small parties who do not affect the main argument, there were in each constituency in 1955 some people who voted Tory, some people who voted Labour and some who did not vote.

Of the non-voters, there is a small proportion—those who died after being registered, and those who moved away without getting a postal vote—these could not have voted.

Of the rest, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the non-voters, it is reasonable to assume, in a constituency evenly divided between the two parties, that about half would have voted Labour if they voted.

Into action for the election

First of two articles by **IAN MIKARDO**

It follows, therefore, that in an evenly divided constituency the potential Labour vote is equal to the actual Labour vote plus about half of the non-voters; and I define as a Tory-held marginal constituency any constituency in which the actual Labour vote plus half the non-voters exceeds the actual Tory vote.

There are over 100 such constituencies, all of which are at present held by Tories and which, by definition, we could win if we polled the full Labour vote.

If, then, a constituency has already enough potential Labour voters in it to win an election, it follows that, without converting a single Tory to Socialism, we can win it if we identify all the Labour voters and get them to go to the poll.

Thus, in this type of constituency the object of the election campaign is not to convert Tories to Socialism but (1) to identify and list the Labour voters, and (2) to get them to the poll.

One can perhaps best illustrate this point by looking at the task in the forthcoming election of a typical Tory-held marginal constituency.

In 1955 we lost Kingston-upon-Hull North by 590 votes. In that election

there were nearly 15,000 non-voters, of whom one might reasonably say 7,000 would have voted Labour if they had voted at all.

It follows that in order to win this constituency at the next election our comrades in North Hull must do one of two things: either (1) convert 300 1955 Tory voters to voting Labour, or (2) get to the poll 600 of the Labour supporters (that is no more than one-twelfth of the total) who did not go to the poll in 1955.

It is obvious that the second of these two tasks is much the more manageable.

Generally, the larger part of the effort and money expended by the traditional methods of our election campaign are devoted not to the second of these tasks, but to the first.

We seem to start the campaign with the idea that in each constituency there is a substantial number of electors who have no political allegiance but will form one during the election campaign, and of electors who are predisposed to vote Conservative but can have their minds changed by us during the course of the election campaign.

Most of our work—all those school-room meetings which take so much trouble to organise, and all those leaflets stuffed through letter boxes, half of which do no more than remind Tories that there is an election on—is directed at those two classes of electors.

But in fact they are both very small in number—very much smaller than the number of Labour supporters who don't vote.

Having then established that the objective of the election campaign in these Tory-held marginals is not to convert but to identify Labour voters and deliver them to the poll, we can now turn to considering the question: When do we change over from inter-election campaigning to the election campaign itself?

We must make that decision for ourselves by an objective assessment of our own campaigning problems, and

not let it be made for us by Mr Macmillan.

In relation to the present situation the important factor in the decision when to change over is the need to maintain the momentum which our Party has built up during the last few months, particularly as it is always very difficult to maintain the momentum during summer conditions.

Taking this factor into account, it is my view that the right time to make change was about 1st July, and that those C.L.P.'s which have not switched over by now ought to do so immediately.

That means that from now on we have got to do two things:

1. We must test every proposed man-hour of effort and every proposed pound of expenditure against the criterion: Does it help to identify the Labour vote and/or deliver it?

2. We must give priority to organisation work, and make propaganda activity incidental to it.

To give an example of what I mean by this last point, we are running a present a summer campaign in Reading in which, on each of two evenings every week, we do three short open-air meetings in the streets of densely populated Labour areas.

The real object in holding these meetings is not to hold a meeting: it is to use the meeting as a focus and an excuse for check-canvassing. With the loudspeaker car we take out 10 or 12 canvassers. And as soon as the loudspeaker starts, these canvassers start knocking on the doors.

They do so using the canvassing register, and they do two jobs: (1) they check Labour promises for post-war votes, removals, election helpers, etc., and enter information about the results on the canvass record; (2) they canvass doubtfuls, and enter changes on the record.

Finally, we want to know what needs to be done to fulfil each of the two objectives of identifying the Labour vote and delivering it. I shall discuss these points next month.

20 Meetings in one week

"Fancy the M.P. coming to see us AFTER an election. I thought politicians were only interested in the voters at election time."

"What a nice gesture, thanking us for our votes." "I'm so glad Mr. Ton called. I've a problem concerning my tied cottage."

"Fancy the Labour Party coming to our small hamlet to see us. Nobody ever bothers about us as a rule, even at election time."

These remarks and many others of a similar nature were made to George and myself during the week that the co-operative canvassing van was in the West Norfolk on 'Labour's Rural Campaign'.

Five days, starting at 10 a.m. (and it was always after 9 p.m. when we returned home, despite a well thought out schedule), we covered over 50 villages, making about 120 whistle stop meetings, talking to people in their homes, chatting with workmen on the roads, addressing a dozen farmworkers loading straw in the field, and about 50 women picking up letters in another.

Our message must have been received by several thousand people, listening in their gardens, or the housewife looking through the bedroom window. But what was perhaps more important than anything else was the fact that the Member of Parliament could find time to see the people on their doorsteps, or in their homes.

AN OLD REBEL

There was the day we all had a 'cuppa' with an old N.U.A.W. 'rebel', three times for speaking his mind, but still as full as ever; that will be a talking point in his village for weeks to come. At a village pub had a two-fold purpose—to quench our thirst on a very hot day and to have a chat with six or seven persons we should probably never have seen inside a meeting hall. The fact that the landlord treated us all and reminded us that "We are all Labour supporters here", also helped. Little things like this make more impression on country people than umpire-political broadcasts.

The tragic stories told us by widows under notice to quit their tied cottage after their husbands had spent years working on the same farm; the case of one dear old lady who received her notice to quit as she was waiting for the hearse to pick up her husband's coffin was most distressing—this was in the 1950's, not the 30's.

CHAP WITH CAR

And, of course, the 'organisational details' picked up on the journeys was of tremendous value: the chap with a car to spare on polling day, the lady who would poll check (now that she had discovered WHY the Tories are on the school gates every election), and not forgetting the vital postal vote information.

Yes, I think eight out of ten marks are due for this type of campaign. I'll make it ten out of ten when (1) the Labour Party gets its own van, with the Labour Party displayed to the utmost, and (2) when South West Norfolk gets a three-week allocation ANNUALLY to cover the whole constituency.

One last point. The Member or the candidate must be available all the time: without them it is only half a job.

B. V. MAJORAM

CANDIDATES

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary Candidates by the National Executive Committee recently:

Southend West ...	Mr. A. Pearson-Clarke
Tonbridge	Mr. K. W. May
Howden	Mr. John Rhodes

★

WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

Buckingham ...	Dr. Gordon Evans
Canterbury ...	Mr. David Curtiss
Battersea South ...	Mr. Eric Hurst
Sutton & Cheam ...	Mr. D. T. White
Barkston Ash ...	Mr. J. Pickles

POINTER FROM HINKLEY POINT

by FRED PHILLIPS

I READ in the July issue of the *Labour Organiser* that a Working Party, appointed by the Secretary of State, had been examining registration procedure and that they reported that the highest number of claims encountered was 20 in a county constituency and five in a borough.

That Working Party certainly could not have visited the Bridgwater constituency, because I made 319 claims alone for people who are working at the Hinkley Point Power Station. I feel this matter is important for agents in constituencies where nuclear power stations (or other major projects) are being built or planned.

The contractors at Hinkley Point have provided a residential camp used mainly by Irish workers and I found that only 50 of the 369 men resident in the camp had been registered. An announcement had been placed on the notice board asking those who wished to be included on the electoral register to notify the office, and only 50 did so.

I visited the site and met the manager of the hostel. I claimed that the

contractors were responsible for ensuring the inclusion of the names of all qualified electors living on their premises. I was then allowed to see the records of residents, which, in the majority of cases, gave only their surnames and initials. I completed claim forms from this information and these were all allowed by the Registration Officer.

The next step was to secure a polling station on the site—for it was some three miles to the nearest one and there was no public transport available. After extensive negotiations the contractors agreed to provide a hutmen's camp on the camp site for use as a polling station, though they have stipulated that 'tellers' from political parties will not be allowed.

It is, of course, too late now to do anything of this nature elsewhere when the election is held on the current register. On the other hand this outline of our achievement in Bridgwater can draw attention to the possibilities which might arise in other constituencies in the near future.

AND THE EDITOR NOTES . . .

MR. PHILLIPS is to be commended on his initiative and achievement. The circumstances he has outlined may not occur in many constituencies, though every agent should anticipate such a possibility.

There are, however, some points which need to be borne in mind when tackling a similar situation. The first is concerned with the method of registration. Our correspondent was fortunate in having the co-operation of the hostel manager and of the Electoral Registration Officer in dealing with these claims after the Electors' Lists had been published—but others may not be so fortunate. We can,

however, profit by the result of his experience.

There will be other major building projects where it will be necessary to accommodate large numbers of employees in hostels provided by the contractors. It is hardly likely that the commencement of such work will escape notice, but it would be advisable for an agent to consult the Electoral Registration Officer when the annual Form 'A' is distributed (or his canvasser is taking place).

Such consultation should ensure an official approach to those in charge of the hostel. It would also be desirable

Continued at the foot of next page

Check these changes now

"I wish to state that I am aware of the provisions of the House of Commons Disqualification Act, 1957, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I am not disqualified for membership of the House of Commons."

EVERY candidate will now find the above declaration included in Consent to Nomination form—an initial part of their nomination as a candidate at Parliamentary elections. It is therefore extremely important that candidates should be clear on the implications of this Act, for a disqualified person cannot sit in the Commons.

The House of Commons Disqualification Act, 1957, was a welcome measure which clarified the eligibility of candidates for membership of the Commons, so far as they might be affected by holding office or place of fit under the Crown.

The Schedules of disqualifications under Judicial and other offices, Com-

Continued from previous page

tain the residents either in person or by explanatory letter of their registration details.

While some of the employees may be living at the hostel for long periods, there will almost certainly be considerable change of personnel. Some (while working on the site) will move to take accommodation in the neighbourhood, while others may pack up work and return home. There will also be those who only intend working there for a limited period.

Amongst each of these categories many will probably also be registered at their home address. This is justifiable where the length of stay on the site is uncertain. They may, however, only vote once at a parliamentary election, so it would be necessary to decide in which constituency their vote will be most useful. If a hostel of this kind is situated in a Tory—or Labour—constituency, the most useful job might be to see that the site is applied for postal votes in their home constituency—particularly if it is a marginal one.

missions, Tribunals and other bodies, and a list of offices which disqualify for Parliamentary candidature.

As a result of legislation on a variety of subjects, amendments have been issued from time to time, and for the benefit of those readers who have a copy of the Act, they are printed here:

First Schedule

Part II.—Insert additional offices which disqualify holders for membership of House of Commons.

Member of: Pig Industry Development Authority,
Council on Tribunals,
Scottish Committee for the Council on Tribunals,
Local Government Council for England,
Local Government Council for Wales,
The Red Deer Commission,
The Electricity Council.

Change of titles

Delete 'The Central Electricity Authority' and insert 'The Central Electricity Generating Board'.

Part III.

'Director of the Imperial Institute' should now read 'Director of the Commonwealth Institute'.

Delete 'Acting Chairman of an Agricultural Land Tribunal' and insert 'A member of a panel of deputy-chairmen of an Agricultural Land Tribunal'.

The paragraph relating to Members of a Wages Council, etc., has also been amended and now reads:

Member of a Wages Council or Central Co-ordinating Committee appointed under paragraph 1 (a) of the First Schedule to the Wages Councils Act, 1945, Chairman of a Committee appointed under para-

graph 1(1)(a) of the Second Schedule to the Terms and Conditions of Employment Act, 1959; or Member of a Commission of Inquiry appointed under paragraph 1(a) of the Second Schedule to the said Act of 1945.

In a recent circular from the Home Office, attention has been drawn to a misunderstanding in relation to the disqualification of members of a Wages Council or Central Co-ordinating Committee appointed under the Wages Councils Act, 1945.

The circular makes it clear that this disqualification relates only to independent members and not to persons appointed as members representing employers or workers.

The Secretary of State has sent a copy of the Act to Acting Returning Officers, who have been asked to see that it is available for inspection at any time by prospective or potential candidates.

The Acting Returning Officers were advised by Home Office Circulars of the amendments listed previously, so their copies should be up-to-date.

- **FRIENDLY SERVICE**
- **FAIR PRICES**

and of course the

- **DIVIDEND**

*That's another
sign of the*

**LONDON
CO-OP**

If there is the slightest doubt about the position of your candidate in this matter, get that doubt cleared NOW.

★ ★ ★

Walter Brown chosen

WALTER BROWN of Aylesbury has been appointed Assistant Regional Organiser for the Southern Region. His appointment was confirmed by the National Executive Committee at its July meeting.

Mr. Brown, who is 38, has been a Party agent for 15 years at Keighley, Heston and Isleworth, Rochester and Chatham, and for the last three years at Aylesbury. Before he joined the agency service he worked at Transport House on the Home Office staff for eight years.

★ ★ ★

S. A. E.

WHEN you write to speakers asking them to come and address your meetings, do you send a stamped addressed envelope for a reply?

It's a good idea to do this because, you must remember, speakers get a lot of requests and these lead to a considerable amount of correspondence. Besides, a stamped addressed envelope often helps to bring a quick reply.

★ ★ ★

An Invitation

The columns of the *Labour Organiser* are open to readers with something interesting and informative to say on those specific subjects in which the magazine deals.

Many readers may not realise that the new idea which they have conceived and put into successful practice will most likely be of value to their counterparts in other places. Therefore, if you have developed something new, either on an old problem or a new problem, write it up and let the rest of the Labour movement have the benefit of your knowledge.

Don't forget the deadline for the receipt of all contributions is the 15th of the month for publication the following month.

ON THE TIDE OF VICTORY

by S. E. BARKER

HERE must have been great rejoicing at the 1923 Annual Conference of the Labour Party held in Queen's Hall, London. Labour had a great victory.

Many members of the Party must have vivid memories of General Election Day, November 15, 1922. The Labour Party had entered the campaign with 414 candidates against 142 at the 1918 General Election.

The gigantic effort strained our resources to the limit but the results were worth all the sacrifice of time, money and effort which had been expended.

At the dissolution Labour held 75 seats. It returned with 142 Members of Parliament.

Among the women candidates who did extremely well were Margaret Bondfield, Susan Lawrence, Dr. Ethel Sutherland, Barbara Ayrton Gould, Winifred Barton, and Mrs. C. Rackham. Labour secured 4,235,457 votes against 2,244,945 at the previous General Election.

TWO BIG VICTORIES

Our triumphs were not at an end for, during the year, there were two fine election victories.

Mr. J. Chuter Ede fought and won a by-election at Mitcham. This was the first time Labour had contested the constituency and Chuter Ede turned a Tory majority of 4,666 into a Labour majority of 1,150.

When there was the famous by-election result in Liverpool, Edge Hill. J. H. Hayes of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers won the seat for Labour.

This was not only a great blow for the Government, but for the very first time Labour had breached the walls of the Conservative stronghold.

These triumphs had not just ended. The Parliamentary Labour

Party had done its share towards victory by making a great mark in the House. The back-room boys and girls in the constituencies then went into action and won.

The pioneer campaigners were not only effective electoral workers. They were mighty good propagandists. Who would have missed the gatherings round the Committee Room fire at the end of a hard night's work to hear of the adventures of the evening?

Those of us who were in the apprenticeship days listened in and picked up many a good tip for the next night's canvass from the pioneers.

THE ORGANISERS

By 1923, out of 603 constituencies, there were only six in which some form of organisation did not exist. The National Executive Committee was of the opinion that the District schemes of organisation had made a big contribution to the development of constituency and local organisation.

The District Organisers had also done a great deal of work training Party members in electoral methods, and it was felt that all these efforts by the District and Women Organisers had made a substantial contribution to the winning of the General Election.

Readers will recall that my last article referred to the appointment of three propagandists for an experimental period.

They were a tremendous success and they, too, played their part in the General Election campaign. The National Executive Committee decided to retain their services for the purpose of opening up the rural and scattered county divisions.

Indeed, two further appointments were made in the persons of Mr. J. E. Mills and Mr. Tom Myers. Tom was a rare character, and many Yorkshire members still revere his memory.

It is to be regretted that our story about the Agency service is not quite so encouraging. Unfortunately, following the General Election, some of the Agency appointments collapsed and they now numbered 138.

The Adjustments Board, now presided over by Mr. Sidney Webb, was seriously disturbed by the abrupt termination of a number of the Agency appointments.

The 1923 Conference agreed not only to the revision of salaries, but approved a recommendation that it be a condition of every Agency appointment that a written agreement should provide for a definite period of notice by either party before termination of the appointment. The period recommended was not less than three months.

This was a step in the right direction, for the uncertainty of employment in the Agency service in those early days must have been a source of great worry.

There is another interesting paragraph in the Report relating to Youth. The organisation of Women had been mentioned in the Reports for many years, but this was the first time reference had been made to the need for the organisation of Youth.

CALL FOR YOUTH

At the National Conference of Labour Women held in York in 1922, a resolution was carried urging the Labour Party "to encourage the formation of Young People's Sections, giving prominence to the out-door life and to anti-militarist teaching".

The Organisational Sub-Committee of the National Executive Committee had considered the question and felt that young people within each local Labour Party should be encouraged.

However, it was thought that such a proposition required serious and careful consideration and Conference approved the setting up of a small Sub-Committee to enquire into what was being done for Youth by local Labour Parties.

The Communist Party was determined to affiliate to the Labour Party by hook or by crook. Conference was equally determined it was not to be affiliated.

For the third year in succession the question was debated fully and for the third time Conference, by 2,880,000 votes to 366,000, supported the National Executive Committee's recommendation that the application of the Communist Party be not entertained.

A most interesting debate took place on the *Daily Herald*. Arthur Henderson opened the debate by reminding Conference that the National Executive Committees of the Labour Party and the

Trades Union Congress had agreed to take over the *Daily Herald*.

Everyone concerned was agreed that the paper was to be made a success, the price must be dropped from twopence to one penny per copy.

HELP FOR 'HERALD'

The immediate result had been an increase in circulation from 138,000 copies to 278,000 copies. It was obvious that the success of the *Herald* was to be assured, then it must have a circulation of 500,000 copies.

The Party set to work in earnest to secure that figure. The whole of the National and Regional organising staff were called in to assist. In addition through the Trades Union Congress 'Daily Herald Development Committee' was set up under the chairmanship of Mr. Arthur Pugh, who at that time was Secretary of the Steel Smelters' Federation.

The Board of Directors accepted the services of Clifford Allen and Norman Angell. Later, Clifford Allen became director.

Everything was done to improve the paper and in March 1923, a 12-page edition of the *Daily Herald* appeared. On that occasion 351,400 copies were sold but alas, the sales began to drop to a circulation of 285,900.

LANSBURY'S PLEA

George Lansbury made a passionate appeal to Conference to support the *Daily Herald*. He told Conference that when the Movement took the paper over members thought, and he thought in his youthful dreams, that all the troubles were over. A friend of his reminded him that probably a lot of other people had thought as he did, that there was nothing else to be done, and that the paper would run along all right. George Lansbury told Conference he had resigned from the Editorship because he felt there should be a change of editor. The Directors had then made him General Manager.

He urged every delegate present to assist the great pledge scheme introduced by Mr. Norman Angell.

Delegates were urged to go back to their local Parties, their Trade Union branches, their Socialist Societies, in the factories and the workshops and get people to sign the pledge that if they bought a paper at all they would buy Labour's own paper, the *Daily Herald*.

Variety is The Key Word

HAVE been looking through some recent issues of local Labour papers and once again been impressed by the vitality of these publications, which in most cases depend on the efforts of people who are already putting in a good deal of time doing other party work.

Broadly speaking, our local journals may be separated into two categories: the rather grey-looking ones, full of reading matter but lacking in appeal; and second, those which try to reproduce the big, bold and lively appearance of the popular daily newspapers.

The bright and bold ones don't always succeed: a sensational approach is really suited to a report of the local party meeting, beginning, "Councillor X.Y.Z. gave an address followed by a selection of officers . . ."

On the other hand, the stodgy-looking papers quite frequently contain rich deposits of useful information. The material just hasn't been laid out and written up to appeal to an ordinary Party member.

All this suggests that with a little

more thought we could produce some really successful journals.

We should try and give the paper variety. Factual and informative articles on local party activities and the work of the local council are useful. A diary of forthcoming events, including as many items as possible, should appear regularly. The name of the prospective parliamentary candidate, or the sitting Labour M.P. should be kept to the fore, possibly by including a 400 word commentary written by him.

It's a great temptation to lift interesting items from other publications. Try to avoid having to do this. Like strong drink, it grows on you, and before you realise it, most of your paper will be made up of 'lifts'. Instead, if you come across a good item, ask yourself why it attracted your interest, then try and find some item from your own district with the same kind of appeal.

These are a few lines of approach to better papers. It's well worth the effort to produce a workmanlike job. Remember, even a paper with a circulation of 500 reaches more people than turn up at most meetings nowadays.

F.D.B.

NEW AGENCY APPOINTMENTS

The following Agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee:

MR. W. V. BURLEY to Banbury. Mr Burley, aged 28, has been a member of the Party for 12 years. For the past 2 years he has been employed, full time, as membership secretary to the Banbury C.L.P.

MISS K. BUTLER to Lewisham. Kathleen Butler, a former bank clerk, 31 years of age, has been appointed to this highly marginal constituency. During her 15 years membership of the Party, she has always been active and was constituency party secretary for the last 6 years.

MR. R. McINNES to Edmonton. From Beith in Ayrshire, Bob McInnes comes south to fill this vacancy. 30 years of age, he has been a member of the Party for 8 years. During his membership he has taken an active part at all elections and has also been closely associated with the work of various voluntary organisations.

MR. A. SCUTT to Deptford. Albert Scutt, aged 42, has been a full-time agent for 10 years, and has held similar posts at Willesden East, Sutton & Cheam, and Mitcham. Prior to entering the agency service, Mr. Scutt was employed in the printing industry.

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